



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMPETENCIES (Annotated)

Public Health Professionals

Professional occupations require knowledge in a field of science or learning characteristically acquired through education or training equivalent to a bachelor's degree or higher degree with major study in or pertinent to the specialized field. The work of a professional occupation requires the exercise of discretion, judgment, and personal responsibility for the application of an organized body of knowledge that is constantly studied to make new discoveries and interpretations, and to improve the data, materials, and methods (adapted from US Office of Personnel Management).

Please note: Competencies marked with an asterisk () may also apply to public health leaders/administrators, depending upon his/her role in the public health agency.*

In order for the public health system to meet performance standards in emergency preparedness the public health professional must be competent to:

1. DESCRIBE the public health role in emergency response in a range of emergencies that might arise. (E.g. "This department provides surveillance, investigation and public information in disease outbreaks and collaborates with other agencies in biological, environmental, and weather emergencies.")

- Describe the role of the local health department and the individual's own profession and unit in relation to other governmental and health organizations in the event of one or more types of public health emergencies.

2. DESCRIBE the chain of command in emergency response.
This description should be appropriate to the individual's level/placement in the organization.

3. IDENTIFY and LOCATE the agency emergency response plan (or the pertinent portion of the plan.)

- Demonstrate knowledge of the local health department's emergency response plan.
- Locate a wallet card, short form, or checklist, if available for the agency.
- Assure that emergency response contact information is current for any organizations or individuals likely to be contacted in an emergency.

4. DESCRIBE his/her functional role(s) in emergency response and demonstrate his/her role(s) in regular drills.

This includes demonstrating knowledge of the agency's emergency response plan.

- Describe a method to use the appropriate mechanisms for contacting public safety and emergency response organizations.
- Describe his/her own specific role in an emergency response.
- Describe how his/her level of response relates to other resources at the local, regional and federal organization levels.
- *Demonstrate readiness to apply professional skills to a range of emergency situations during regular drills as appropriate to the professional role and position.
- *Demonstrate a procedure for accessing surveillance data relevant to the locality or jurisdiction.
- *Use surveillance data to identify, investigate and monitor health events in the locality or jurisdiction.
- *Interpret surveillance data to identify unusual events or emergencies.



Competency #4 continued...

- *Describe how to access science-based protocols to guide an immediate investigation and risk/threat assessment of communicable disease outbreaks, suspected environmental health hazards or biological agent threats.
- *Demonstrate the selection and use of appropriate personal protective equipment.
- *Identify and access written protocols for an emergency program of contact and source tracing when a suspected exposure occurs.
- *Identify steps for accessing laboratory resources capable of supporting the investigation of adverse health events.
- *Identify the scientific bases and strength of evidence to evaluate the potential impact of a possible emergency.
- *Describe a method to develop and adapt approaches to an emergency situation that take into account cultural differences in the affected community.
- *Describe a method to regularly evaluate laws and regulations to enforce in response to specific emergency conditions.
- *Describe a method to identify those laws and regulations to enforce in response to specific emergency conditions.
- *Recognize when to enforce laws and regulations in response to specific emergency situations.
- *Describe a method to initiate appropriate enforcement of laws and regulations in response to emergency situations.
- *Participate in research to improve recognition and management of emergencies that have public health impact.
- *Share research technical expertise with those conducting research an emergency preparedness and response.

5. DEMONSTRATE correct use of all communication equipment used for emergency communication. (phone, fax, radio, etc.).

6. DESCRIBE communication role(s) in emergency response:

- **Within agency**
- **Media**
- **General public**
- **Personal (family, neighbors)**

Within agency

- Identify persons from whom directions might be received, and to whom information is communicated.
- Describe a method to inform officials within the agency about the potential public health impact of actions affecting community preparedness for emergencies and explain policy options appropriate to the emergency.

Media

- For most professionals this is "Refer media calls to the press office #."
- The role of a professional with leadership responsibilities may include appropriately communicating the public health aspects of emergency situations to print, radio or television media serving the community.

General public

- In most cases this is "Refer inquiries to the hot line #."

Personal (family, neighbors)

- Have/activate a family emergency plan, if needed.
- Explain how a public health professional is viewed as a representative of the agency when communicating with family, friends and others in the community.



Competency #6 continued...

- *Maintain regular communication with partner professionals in other agencies involved in emergency response as appropriate to the professional role and position.
- *Maintain regular and periodic contact with a network of consultants, technical assistants and community-based assets to collect and analyze health data.
- *Communicate the public health aspects of emergencies to other emergency planning agencies.
- *Communicate risk and appropriate medical management accurately and effectively to health professionals who may diagnose or treat those possibly exposed or injured in an emergency.
- *Describe a method to maintain a current directory of public safety and emergency response organizations.
- *Describe a method to maintain regular and periodic contact with local and regional public safety and emergency response agencies.
- *Describe a method to build an effective community wide response to an emergency using leadership, team building, negotiations and conflict resolution.
- *Describe a method to manage an effective community wide response to an emergency using leadership, team building, negotiations and conflict resolution.
- *Identify emergency medical service capacity to meet the needs of those who may be injured, exposed or need care in a public health emergency.
- *Describe a method to coordinate roles and responsibilities for emergency medical care providers meeting the needs of those who may be injured exposed or need care in a public health emergency.
- *Seek input from partners in conducting the evaluation of an emergency response.

7. IDENTIFY limits to own knowledge/skill/authority and IDENTIFY key system resources for referring matters that exceed these limits.

8. APPLY creative problem solving and flexible thinking to unusual challenges within his/her functional responsibilities and EVALUATE effectiveness of all actions taken.

9. RECOGNIZE deviations from the norm that might indicate an emergency and DESCRIBE appropriate action (e.g. communicate clearly within the chain of command).

- List examples of possible deviations in the individual's work setting, such as a cluster of unusual lab reports, a series of atypical phone calls, a suspicious delivery, etc. that might indicate a need for emergency response.

10. PARTICIPATE in continuing education to maintain up to date knowledge in areas relevant to emergency response (e.g. emerging infectious diseases, hazardous materials, diagnostic tests, etc.)

- Communicate public health emergency response issues for inclusion in research.